

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Madison, 6

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

WW JUL 16 1951

July 12, 1951.

Dr. Warren Weaver, Director,  
Natural Sciences Division,  
Rockefeller Foundation,  
49 E. 49th Street,  
New York, N.Y.

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Dear Dr. Weaver:

I enclose herewith a final report covering our research activities under the grant-in-aid for our project on the Genetics of Bacteria, for the period May 1, 1948 to April 30, 1951. I must apologize for the delay in transmitting this report, but may refer to two extenuating circumstances: a) it takes some time to develop at least a little perspective on the work one is doing from day-to-day, and b) I was extremely busy, especially in preparing a very detailed summary of our work of several years in the form of a manuscript for the Cold Spring Harbor Symposium which was held in June. Many elaborate details have been omitted from the report, so as to keep it within reasonable bounds, but these will be available as reprints of the symposium proceedings. The report is, in a sense, a condensed version of that scientific publication.

In a previous letter to Dr. Loomis (January 15, 1951), I mentioned that until early 1952 the likely future needs of our research program would remain rather uncertain, so that I might postpone until then any request for consideration of a new application for support. A situation has now developed, however, which impels me to reopen this question in the very near future, if you are willing to consider it. We were very lucky during the last few months in finding a variety of new strains of *E. coli* that we could cross with one another, and that show great serological diversity. The mechanisms of inheritance of antigens in bacteria are of great importance and interest, and this is one project that I feel should be initiated as soon as possible, now that the necessary biological material is available. Dr. M. R. Irwin, who, as you know has had pioneering experience in the immunogenetics of higher animals shares this interest, and we expect to collaborate in many phases of this work. So, for the past year, we have been looking for a suitable graduate student to grapple with this problem. None has appeared, but it became evident that it would be more appropriate for someone who had already acquired some experience in microbial genetics and in immunology.

At about this time, a Mr. Palmer D. Skaar, now completing his doctoral dissertation with Sonneborn at Indiana University, wrote to us outlining virtually the same program that we had discussed, and asking whether he might not seek a Merck fellowship to pursue such work with us. We would

have been pleased at this outcome, but unfortunately he did not win the fellowship. We feel that this research program could best be realized if it were possible to offer Mr. (or soon-to-be Dr.) Skaar a reasonable stipend as a research associate to work on this problem for the next two years or so. Some emergency funds can possibly be secured from within the institution, but for any assurance that the project will be able to continue, we should need some assistance from extramural sources.

This is hardly a formal application for such support, but it is certainly an enquiry looking forward to your encouragement, if it is to be had, to prepare such an application. I would hope that the Foundation might continue to underwrite our general program on the same broad basis as it has from 1948-51, in addition to specific provision for the research associate mentioned, but perhaps I had better leave it to you to suggest the general terms of financial extent and duration which the Foundation might be willing to give some consideration.

The grant-in-aid now terminated has been instrumental in putting this laboratory and its research program on bacterial genetics in working order. It would be difficult for me adequately to express my appreciation both for this end-result and for the cordiality with which my correspondence relating to the grant was treated.

Yours sincerely,

*Joshua Lederberg*  
Joshua Lederberg,

Associate Professor of Genetics.

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